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**Honorable Stakoe** **March 15, 2006**  
**Chairperson for Local Government & Urban Policy Committee**  
**N0893 House Office Building / P.O. Box 30014**  
**Lansing, MI 48909-7514**

**RE: INCLUSIVE HOME DESIGN ACT, HB4138**  
**Honorable Stakoe and Committee members,**

**Good afternoon and thank you Honorable Stakoe and Committee members. I appreciate the time and effort that you have given to let us talk to you about the benefits and advantages that HB 4138 will do to further the housing options for people with and without disabilities in Michigan. My name is Sue Hart and I am speaking in favor of HB 4138, (IHDA). I have been working as a housing advocate at The Disability Network in Flint for about seven years. I am also the Chairperson for the MACIL (Michigan Association of Centers of Independent Living) Housing Group. One major and very important component of independent living is the right to obtain adequate housing. Finding accessible, affordable, and integrated housing in Michigan has been very difficult and I believe that this bill is a big start in the right direction towards addressing those housing needs.**

**One of the most frustrating aspects is the use of public funds to perpetuate the building of inaccessible homes. Billions of tax dollars are spent every year on America's housing stock. The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (or MSHDA) plans the use of those funds for our State. The supporters of House Bill 4138, sponsored by Rep. Lorence Wenke and Rep. Fred Miller, have collaborated and came to a mutual agreement with MSHDA and the Community Economic**

**Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM) regarding the language of this bill. All of the interested partners agreed to spend half of one pot of Federal dollars to build homes in 2007 that are accessible through one entrance on the first floor, and which allow an accessible path to the first floor bathroom. It is *revenue neutral* and is *not an unfunded mandate*, since tax dollars are already going to build these homes.**

**This issue is important to me because people with mobility impairments in Michigan continue to experience a severe shortage of housing they can get into. As a result, some people with long-term care needs are going into nursing facilities, at great cost to taxpayers! Without access, people cannot join their friends, or network with job or business prospects.**

**Right now, Michigan tax dollars are going to continue building structures that create more inaccessible homes. Taxpayers are paying to build homes they won't be able to get into! This bill is not an unfunded mandate. It affects only homes built with funding from MSHDA, and only 50% of them. It doesn't require full accessibility, but only "visitability", meaning one no-step entry and an accessible path to the bathroom.**

**Some of the benefits for passage of IHDA (HB 4138) include:**

- Taxpayers who pay for this housing will be able to get into them to visit their loved ones and network with job / business prospects at informal social events.**
- Lost-time injuries and workers compensation claims from falls on steps will be reduced.**
- National Association of Home Builders said universal design and/or making homes more accessible for the elderly and disabled would be one of the top future trends in remodeling.**

- By 2011 the first wave of the 76 million Baby Boom generation begins turning 65 and 90% of them polled by AARP stated that they want to remain in their homes.
- 1.8 million falls led to an emergency room visit among Americans aged 65 and older. These falls are the leading cause of death among older persons. The total direct cost of these falls was an estimated \$16.4 billion, with an average direct cost per fall of nearly \$9,400. About 48% of the costs were paid by Medicare, 16% from federal Medicaid funds, and 11% by state Medicaid funds.
- 247,098 of all people living in nursing homes across the country said that they would rather live in the community.
- Hospital discharge planners could safely send people with mobility impairments home, not to nursing homes at a base cost to taxpayers of \$4,710 month, plus medications and treatment. For more info: <http://www.aarp.org/bulletin/longterm/Articles/a2003-10-30-dailycost.html> .
- Cost of making a new home visitable is minimal or nonexistent, while the cost of retrofitting a home with steps to make it visitable after construction is often prohibitive. For more information, see [www.concretechange.org](http://www.concretechange.org).

**HB4138 bill has already obtained bipartisan support and endorsements from key organizations including:**

- Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)

- **Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM)**
- **Michigan Paralyzed Veterans Association (MI PVA)**
- **Michigan Association of Centers for Independent Living (MACIL)**
- **Michigan Disability Rights Coalition (MDRC)**
- **United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) of Michigan**
- **Michigan Protection and Advocacy Services (MPAS)**
- **National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS) of Michigan**
- **Area Agencies on Aging of Michigan**
- **American Association of Retired Persons of Michigan (AARP)**
- **The Executive Board of The Disability Network**
- **Genesee County Land Bank**
- **Kalamazoo Valley Habitat For Humanity**
- **U S Conference of Mayors 2005 passed Resolution 28 which strongly promotes local and state initiatives to promote visitable housing**
- **Disability Resource Center**


**There are also many communities on a state and local level that are incorporating visitability standards into their community development. Some are listed below:**

- **Georgia**
- **Texas**
- **Vermont**
- **Kansas**
- **City of Atlanta, Georgia**
- **City of San Antonio, Texas**
- **City of Austin, Texas**
- **Urbana Illinois**
- **Pima County Arizona**
- **Iowa City, Iowa**
- **Bolingbrook, Illinois**

- Toledo, Ohio
- British Mandate

**Please support the Inclusive Home Design Act. Thank you Representative Stakoe and committee members for your time and consideration. I also would like to thank Representative Wenke and Representative Miller for their efforts by introducing and sponsoring this bill.**

**Sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue Hart". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

**Sue Hart.  
The Disability Network  
MACIL Housing Group**